



Play: The Strongest One

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR	LITTLE RED ANT
SECOND ANT	THIRD ANT
FOURTH ANT	SNOW
SUN	WIND
HOUSE	MOUSE
CAT	STICK
FIRE	WATER
DEER	ARROW
BIG ROCK	

NOTE: For a large group, children can share the parts of the Second, Third, and Fourth ants. In a smaller group, one child can play several of the parts in Scent 2.

PROPS/SCENERY

Flashlights can be used for dim lighting in Scenes 1 and 2.

The Mesa in Scene 2 can be suggested with a painted backdrop.

COSTUMES

Narrator wears a loose, flowing shirt over pants, with a silver necklace and a long head scarf tied at the side.

The Ants wear red T-Shirts and red face paint. Their feelers can be suggested by securing red pipe cleaners around a child's headband.

Snow, Sun, Wind, Stick, Fire, Water, and Big Rock, all wear T-shirts decorated with their symbol. This can be drawn on paper and pinned to the T-Shirt, i.e., a Snowflake, Sun, Wind with puffing cheeks, Branch, Flame, drop of Water, Boulder. Face paint can also be used.

House carries a large paper cutout depicting an adobe.

Mouse, Cat and Deer can be suggested with face paint, felt tails, and felt ears (or, for the Deer, pipe-cleaner antlers) secured to a child's headband.

Arrow carries a large cardboard arrow.

SCENE 1: INSIDE THE ANTS' HOLE

On a darkened stage, the ants crouch together.

NARRATOR: Little Red Ant lived in a hole under the Big rock, with all of its relatives. It often wondered about the world outside; Who in the world was the strongest one of all? One day in late spring, Little Red Ant decided to find out.

LITTLE RED ANT: I am going to find out who is the strongest. I am going to go outside and walk around.

SECOND ANT: Be careful! We Ants are very small. Something might step on you.

THIRD ANT: Yes, we are the smallest and weakest ones of all.

FOURTH ANT: Be careful, it is dangerous out there!

LITTLE RED ANT: I will be careful. I will find out who is the strongest. Maybe the strongest one can teach us how to be stronger.

SCENE 2: THE MESA

Little Red Ant walks back and forth onstage.

NARRATOR: So, Little Red Ant went outside and began to walk around. As Little Red Ant walked, the Snow began to fall.

Snow walks onto the stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Oh, my feet are cold. This snow makes everything freeze. Snow must be the strongest. I will ask! Snow, are you the strongest of all?

SNOW: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

SNOW: Sun is Stronger. When Sun shines on me, I melt away. Here it comes!

As Sun walks onto the stage, Snow flops around and hurries off the stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Ahh, Sun must be the strongest. I will ask! Sun, are you the strongest of all?

SUN: No , I am not the strongest.



LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

SUN: Wind is stronger. Wind blows the clouds across the sky and covers my face. Here it comes!

As Wind comes onto the stage, Sun hurries off the stage with face covered in hands.

LITTLE RED ANT: Wind must be the strongest. I will ask! Wind, are you the strongest of all?

WIND: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

WIND: House is stronger. When I come to House, I cannot move it. I must go around it. Here it comes!

As House walks onto the stage, Wind hurries off stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: House must be the strongest. I will ask! House, are you the strongest of all?

HOUSE: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

HOUSE: Mouse is stronger. Mouse comes and chews holes in me. Here it comes!

As Mouse scampers onto the stage, House lurches off the stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Mouse must be the strongest. I will ask! Mouse, are you the strongest of all?

MOUSE: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

MOUSE: Cat is stronger. Cat chases me, and if Cat catches me, Cat will eat me. Here it comes!

As Cat walks on stage, Mouse hurries offstage, squeaking.

LITTLE RED ANT: Cat must be the strongest. I will ask! Cat, are you the strongest of all?

CAT: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

CAT: Stick is stronger. When Stick hits me, I run away. Here it comes!

As Stick walks on stage, Cat hurries offstage, meowing.

LITTLE RED ANT: Stick must be the strongest. I will ask! Stick, are you the strongest of all?

STICK: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

STICK: Fire is stronger. When I am put into Fire, Fire burns me up. Here it comes!

As Fire walks on stage, Stick hurries off the stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Fire must be the strongest. I will ask! Fire, are you the strongest of all?

FIRE: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

FIRE: Water is stronger. When Water is poured on me, I disappear. Here it comes!

As Water walks on stage, Fire hurries offstage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Water must be the strongest. I will ask! Water, are you the strongest of all?

WATER: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

WATER: Deer is stronger. When Deer comes, Deer drinks me up. Here it comes!

As Deer walks on stage, Water hurries offstage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Deer must be the strongest. I will ask! Deer, are you the strongest of all?

DEER: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

DEER: Arrow is stronger. When Arrow strikes me, it can harm me. Here it comes!

As Arrow flies onto the stage, Deer hurries offstage, with leaping bounds.

LITTLE RED ANT: Arrow must be the strongest. I will ask! Arrow, are you the strongest of all?

ARROW: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

ARROW: Big Rock is stronger. I am shot from the bow, and I hit Big Rock, Big Rock breaks me.

LITTLE RED ANT: Do you mean the same Big Rock where the Red Ants live?



ARROW: Yes, that is Big Rock. Here it comes!

As Big Rock walks onto the stage, Arrow flies off stage.

LITTLE RED ANT: Big Rock must be the strongest. I will ask! Big Rock, are you the strongest of all?

BIG ROCK: No, I am not the strongest.

LITTLE RED ANT: Who is stronger than you?

BIG ROCK: You are stronger. Every day, you and the other Red Ants come and carry little pieces of me away. Someday I will be all gone...

SCENE 3: THE ANTS' HOLE

NARRATOR: So, Little Red Ant went back home and spoke to the other Ants.

The Ants crouch together on the darkened stage.

SECOND ANT: Little Red Ant has returned.

THIRD ANT: Little Red Ant has come back alive!

FOURTH ANT: Tell us about what you have learned. Who is the strongest of all?

LITTLE RED ANT: I have learned that everything is stronger than something else...

...and even though we Ants are small, in some ways, WE are the strongest of all!

THE END

Follow-up questions:

1. What is the theme or meaning of this play?
2. When Little Red Ant goes around and discovers that in some way, everyone he or she talks to can be weakened by something else, did this surprise you? What did this make you think about?
3. Can you see the relationship between all the things in this play and natural cycles like leaves falling off the tree and going back into the ground or snow thawing on the mountain and running back to the stream in the spring?
4. Can you see how animals and nature work together in a relationship called an "ecosystem"?

Teachers: help students develop an understanding of an "ecosystem" or the natural environment. The primary message is that all things are connected in one way or another, so we must try to strike a balance between our modern society, natural habitats and help maintain the environment so that we will all have a nice, healthy place to live for future generations.

Source: *Pushing up the sky: seven Native American plays for children*, Joseph Bruchac, Dial Books for Young Readers (2000).

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Play: Jobs for Bags

CHARACTERS

- Employment Person with sign, "Employment Office"

Group of protesters

- Protester 1, carrying a brown grocery bag containing a hat made from a brown paper bag
- Protester 2, carrying a brown grocery bag containing a mask made from a brown paper bag
- Protester 3, carrying a brown grocery bag containing a book cover made from a brown paper bag

The Employment Person walks out with a sign that says "Employment Office."

A group of protesters walk out; three are carrying paper bags. All are yelling, "Jobs for bags! Jobs for bags!"

Protesters circle the Employment Person and then line up on both sides.

Employment Person: "Can I help you?"

Protester 1: "We are -looking for jobs for paper bags."

Employment Person: I am sorry but we don't have any jobs for bags. "Protester 2: "But you must have something."

Employment Person: "No, I just don't have any jobs for bags. All bags can do is hold items, and we don't have any requests for holding items. "

Protester 3: "But bags have so many other uses." All Protesters: "Yeah, bags have many uses."

Protester 1 pulls out a paper hat from a brown grocery bag and places it on his head.

Protester 1: "See, I can be a hat."

Employment Person: Well, actually we do have a job for a hat at the community garden.

Protester 2 pulls out a mask from a brown grocery bag and places it on his or her face.

Protester 2: "I can be a cool mask."

Employment Person: A mask? Yes, the community theater is looking for a mask.

Protester 3 pulls out book cover from a brown grocery bag.

Protester 3: I can be a book cover."

Employment Person (getting excited): "Great! Our local school needs book covers. They can hire at least ten of you." All protesters cheer.

Employment Person (asks the audience): "Do you know any other jobs that paper bags can do?"

The End.

This play idea comes from "As the Bag is Reused" written by teachers at the Foothill Horizons Teachers Retreat in 1997, sponsored by the San Joaquin County Office of Education and is borrowed from the California Integrated Waste Management Board's "Closing the Loop" Curriculum.



Play: The Funnels

Characters

- Maria
- Bill, a younger person
- Mark
- Bruce
- Kim
- Bob, an older person
- Kathy
- Leann
- John

Props: Two funnels

Scene I

Maria walks out carrying two funnels. She tosses them into the trashcan and sits down on a bench near the trashcan.

Maria observes.

Scene II

Bob, an older person, and **Bill**, a younger person, walk up and stand next to the trash can.

Bill says in a normal voice, "Why did the chicken cross the road on a bicycle again?"

Bob, holding a hand up to his ear replies, "Eh, what did you say?"

Bill repeats the question louder.

Bob, holding a hand up to his ear replies, "Huh, I can't hear you."

Bill reaches into the trashcan and pulls out a funnel and hands it to Bob.

Bob puts it up to his ear.

Bill says, "Why did the chicken cross the road on a bicycle again?"

Bob replies, "I don't know. Why did the chicken cross the road on a bicycle again?"

Bill answers, "Because he wanted to RECYCLE."

The two put the funnel in the trash can and walk off laughing.

Maria laughs.

Scene III

Kathy and **Mark** walk out laughing and dancing. They look in the garbage can and pull out the funnels. **They each** place a funnel on their heads and begin counting down, "'Five, four, three, two, one-Happy New Year!" **Then they** take the funnels off their heads and turn them over and yell through them, "Happy New Year!" **They put** the funnels in the trashcan and walk off.

Maria smiles.

Scene IV

Leann and **Bruce** walk out. Bruce is coughing. Leann reaches into the trashcan and pulls out a funnel. **Leann** says, "You really need to take your medicine." **Then Leann** holds the funnel up to Bruce's mouth and pretends to pour medicine into it.

Bruce says, "Wow, my cough is gone. Thank you, Leann."

Leann says, "'You are welcome.'"

They put the funnel back in the trashcan and walk off.

Maria is watching closely.

Scene V

John and **Kim** walk up and pick up the funnels.

John holds the pointed ends up to his eyes like binoculars and looks all around as if looking at birds. He hands the funnels to Kim, who looks through them. **Kim** then places the funnels back in the trashcan. Both walk off.

Maria then stands up and walks over to pick up the funnels. She looks them over and says, "Wow, these have so many uses. I didn't need to throw them away!" She walks off admiring the funnels.

The End.

The original script for "The Funnels" was written by teachers at the Foot-hill Horizons Teachers Retreat on April 18, 1997, sponsored by the San Joaquin Office of Education. This is an edited version that was borrowed from the California Integrated Waste Management Board's "Closing the Loop: Exploring Integrated Waste Management and Resource Conservation" curriculum.



Play: Rocky's Not-So-Fun Adventures

Rebecca: Hi Rocky! How are you?

Rocky: Funny you should ask. I had to go to the hospital last week. My stomach still doesn't feel very good.

Rebecca: Too much candy again, Rocky?

Rocky: Not exactly. I was having a good time playing house and I ate something that I found under the kitchen sink. It looked like something my Mom spreads on crackers at her parties... but it made me very sick, so the doctor makes me eat special foods until I feel better. At the hospital, they told me that there are lots of things in my house which are poisonous, toxic, hazardous, and dangerous to eat, smell, and touch.

Rebecca: Really? I can understand why eating something that is not really food would make you sick, but how can just smelling or touching something make you sick?

Rocky: Well, the doctor told me that some types of chemicals are so strong, that getting them close enough to smell might burn my eyes and nose! The doctor also said that some things will burn your skin if you touch it!

Rebecca: Wow! Let's look around my house for dangerous things.

(Rebecca looks inside a cardboard box set upright like a cabinet—it has real products in it or magazine pictures of products that are hazardous.)

Rebecca: Rocky, how can we tell if something is dangerous?

Rocky: Let's look on the label for a picture of a skull and cross-bones. Another way to tell is to look for the words "caution," "warning," or "danger."

Rebecca: Look at this stuff! I'm going to throw it all in the garbage!

Rocky: NO, NO, NO! If you put it in the garbage it goes to the landfill and might leak into the soil or into the water deep in the ground that we drink from!

Rebecca: Oh, then I'll pour it down the sink!

Rocky: NO, NO, NO! If you pour it down the sink, it goes to the water treatment plant, but some chemicals are so strong, they might get into the rivers or lakes which would harm the fish, plants, and other wildlife!

Rebecca: Oh, I see, what if we pour it into the ocean where there's lots of water, then?

Rocky: NO, NO, NO! There are simply too many people and too many chemicals to be safe. Rebecca, DILUTION IS NOT THE SOLUTION TO POLLUTION!

(Rocky turns to the audience...)

Everyone say it with me, "DILUTION IS NOT THE SOLUTION TO POLLUTION."

Rebecca: Okay, now I get it, but how am I supposed to deal with these dangerous things then?

Rocky: Well, now that they are already in our house, we should first use them as they were intended and follow the instructions so we don't use more than we need. Next, if we have used all of a product that we want and still have some left, we should ask some of our friends and neighbors if they might be able to use the rest.

Rebecca: Oh, good idea, Rocky! But what if I try this and I still have some dangerous stuff left?



Rocky: Well, then tell your parents to call the city or county to ask about special places that take hazardous things and have special ways to get rid of them. Some cities and counties have “Special Collection Events” where everyone in the community can bring in their poisonous or toxic products for proper disposal.

Rebecca: Cool! When my mom and dad come home, I’m going to ask them to be careful with hazardous things and tell them these things need special disposal in order to protect our water and our wildlife!

Rocky: That’s a good idea, me too! And I’m never, ever going to play with household products or eat anything that I don’t know for sure is food again.

The End

Sources: Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, Revised 1998, (K-8 edition), Columbia SC. Contact 1-800-768-7348. Modified by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. Is everything you might find at your home safe for you to touch, eat or play with?
2. Name some of the ways to properly handle some potentially hazardous things? (Use it up, give to a friend, call the city or county to find out how to dispose of it properly).
3. If you aren’t sure if something is hazardous what three words should you look for on the label? (Caution, Warning, Danger).
4. Name some things that your parents can do to keep hazardous things away from you. (Store in a safe place, keep cabinets locked, explain what things are used for and how they are dangerous, etc.)



Play: The Throwaway Three

CHARACTERS

A Roman	A Briton
A Settler	A Cave Dweller
A Colonist	An Industrialist
A Scientist	A Native American

PROPS

Skins (cave dweller)
 Roman Helmet & Bag of Trash (roman)
 Stack of Trash (Briton)
 Pilgrim Hat (settler)
 Coonskin Hat & Leather (colonist)
 Engineer's Cap & 3 Sweaters (industrialist)
 (One handmade; two machine-made)
 Lab Coat (scientist)
 Nylon stockings , Plastic Bags &
 Containers (industrialist)
 Permanent-pressed shirt (scientist)
 Plastic Bag & TV Dinner (industrialist)
 Broken small appliance (scientist)
 Toy Car (industrialist)
 Indian Headband (native american)
 blanket and plastic soda bottle (industrialist)
 Clear glass vase with flower (scientist)

Cave Dweller

This is the tale of the Throwaway Three,
 Of Man and his Garbage throughout his-to-ry:

Now they're very nice people, like you and like me,
 who all have a problem, as you will soon see-
 What shall they do with their garbage and trash?

(Everyone Together)

Why, throw it! Or bury it! Or burn it to ash!

Cave Dweller - 50,000 BC

I am a cave dweller who lives on the ground. What
 do I do with old stuff all around?
 Why, burn it, like meat; burn it up in the fire;
 Or bury it like bones, in the muck and the mire.

All

Yes, throw it, or bury it, or burn it to ash!
 That's how we always get rid of our trash!

Roman - 200 BC

I am a Roman who lives in the town.
 Our laws won't allow me to just throw it down.
 I have to drag it away for a mile
 And then I can dump it, forget it, and smile!

Briton-1200 AD

I am a Briton, wary and quick;
 Down on our street it can get pretty thick.
 When housewives up there want to pitch out their
 goo.
 They just leave it out there and yell: "Gardy-loo!"

(Any Actor)

Stands on chair and yells, "Gardy-loo!"

Briton

It will stay there and stay there until the next rain, or
 until our fair London should burn down again.

All

Oh, what do we do with our garbage and trash: We
 throw it, or bury it, or burn it to ash!

Settler- 1630

I am the settler. I came without much,
 But everything else I must make with my hands. So
 I don't throw out much - I use all I can.
 Cloth scraps become quilts; I reuse my bent nails
 It will be long time 'fore the next trade ship sails.

Colonist - 1700

I am a colonist; now life's not so tough.
 We have trade between cities that brings lots of
 stuff
 And some things are made by our townfolk today,
 I could buy a new harness, throw this old one away.

We have pigs and hogs running loose in our street,
 If I toss it out there, they'll eat it up neat!

Or I might bury it right over there.
 Or I might burn it; nobody would care.
 You see; the New world is the same as the Old!
 We trashmakers come from the time-honored
 mold.

**All**

What are we still doing with garbage and trash?
You guessed it! We throw it away, or bury it, or
burn it to ash!

Industrialist- 1890

I'm the industrial person and new on the scene, I
mass-produce goods with my trusty machine.

This sweater, handmade, took a week in days of
yore,
But now in one hour, I can make forty-four.
I make things so cheaply, you can now afford two
And throw out twice as much trash as you need to
do.

Scientist - 1950 (Scientist)

I am the scientific person in the new post-war age.
We've learned a few tricks while the war shortage
raged.
When we couldn't get natural stuff to process
We invented synthetics to replace the rest.

Industrialist

Rayons and nylons, acrylics and plastics,
For furniture and clothing and even elastics;
Forget your old woolens and silks and your cotton;
Real wooden toys and washboards are forgotten.

Scientist

Our new stuff will last 'til forever, you see
Even when it's worn out to you and to me.
Permanent pressed, pre-sized and pre-shrunk.
When dingy and old, it's still permanent "junk."

(Any Actor)

Yells, "Junk!"

Industrialist

We make instant menus that come in a PACK. You
just boil the food in its own plastic sack.

Or our TV dinner in its tinfoil tray
It's quick; you don't wash it; just throw it away!

Scientist

We make lots of TVs and clothes dryers, too.
Don't ask for a trade-in; you're kidding, aren't you?

Industrialist

Our new cars all change with each model year,
Don't try to repair them, the cost's much too dear.
Besides, we don't bother to make last year's parts
For Skylarks, or Novas, or Cougars, or Darts.

Scientist

It's the New Thing, the NEW that America craves.
So out, out with the old stuff, away to its graves.

Industrialist

So what if there're more of us buying more goods?
So what if they won't rot away as they should!

Native American

Now wait just a minute! You cannot fail
To include me in your historic trash tale.
We Indians lived simply, on prairies, in woods,
We made no high trash piles, nor mass-produced
goods.

Let me be your critic, show where you stand;
And tell you just how you're defiling our land.
Your new fangled goods will not rot away.
When you throw them all down they remain where
they lay.
Then you say you will bury them deep in the ground:
All your urban trash will make quite a mound!

So then you will burn it, in smoldering masses
And fill up our air with smoke, deadly gases!
Oh, all of your answers have faults everywhere;
You'll either ruin the water, the land or the air.

What's more, your resources--your lumber, your
ore--
Get smaller each year than the year before.
And what's more--this old earth's not making any
more.

Industrialist

You're right. Our resources are shrinking away
While our garbage problem grows bigger each day.
We're always converting resources to refuse
Instead of recycling them for reuse!

Scientist

Oh stop it! Don't drop it! We'll think of a way
To make food for cows that's much better than hay.
Don't burn it, return it--we'll make something new,



(Flower in the bottle for a vase, flower out, bottle held up to the eye for a spyglass).

A vase for your mother, a spyglass for you.
Don't bury it, carry it--back to the mill.
We'll make a new blanket to ward off the chill.

(Wrap the blanket around shoulders).

Industrialist

It's time we progress past the Disposal Age
And make recycling the popular rage!
We'll have to give up old solutions for trash
And all realize that its pure balderdash--to just...

All

Throw it, or bury it, or burn it to ash!

Source: Washington Department of Environmental Quality, *A-way With Waste* (1991). Originally developed by the Atlanta Clean City Commission.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Name the different ways in which the characters dispose of their garbage.
2. What are some of the challenges the different characters face with the method of disposal that each one describes? Name some of the pros and cons to each method.
3. Which character talks about the first examples of replacing things before they are worn out or broken? What time period is this?
4. What are the alternatives described for burying or burning garbage?
5. Which character or characters do you think has the best method of dealing with trash? Why?